

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Gerardo Sorkin, Director

Re: Commission Meeting February 2, 2010

Prior to the meeting being called to order, each commissioner provided an introduction as well as a bit of personal and professional background in order to get acquainted with their fellow commissioners.

Meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Present: Walter Heinig, Donna Malley, Judith Meyers, Michael Pepe, Krista Polinsky.

Staff: Gerardo Sorkin, Director and Carla Pelliccio, Secretary.

Absent: Thomas Balga, William Carey, Maggie Jensen, Jim Marshall.

First Selectman Mike Freda was present to address three orders of business: entertaining a nomination for Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary of the Community Services Commission. Donna Malley made a motion to nominate Walter Heinig as Chairman, seconded by Judith Meyers. Walter Heinig made a motion to nominate Donna Malley as Vice Chair, seconded by Michael Pepe. Walter Heinig made a motion to nominate Michael Pepe as Secretary, seconded by Krista Polinsky. All were in favor.

II. Acceptance of Minutes:

Donna Malley made a motion to accept the Minutes of January 5, 2010, seconded by Michael Pepe.

III. Correspondence:

Mr. Sorkin received a letter dated January 18, 2010 from Amy Casavina Hall, Director of Community Impact at the United Way of Greater New Haven, acknowledging their appreciation of the Department of Community Services' participation in their annual Diaper Drive. United Way reported that the total number of diapers collected in 2009 tripled from the prior year.

An updated commissioner contact sheet was provided to each commissioner. Mr. Sorkin asked that all review and make any appropriate corrections or additions. All information appeared accurate.

IV. Director's Report:

Daycare:

Enrollment: Preschool – all slots are filled/ 15 ~ School Age – all slots are filled/ 30

Currently a short waiting list exists. Mr. Sorkin will confirm the exact number of families on the waiting list at the next meeting. Currently the day care operates at full capacity. Due to space restrictions, no potential exists at this time to grow the number of slots within the day care program. For those families who are on the waiting list, a list of other area daycare programs are provided as a resource.

Special Events: Preschoolers learned all about dinosaurs as well as the theme of hibernation. All activities were centered around this theme. Additionally Martin Luther King, Peace, Friendship were discussed with the children.

-The North Haven Citizen wrote an article showcasing the day care program and its diversity and involvement in the community.

-Thursday, January 28th was an early dismissal day for school age children, so they came to daycare after 1:00pm dismissal.

-Approximately 60 video tapes were transferred to the North Haven public library. Mr. Sorkin emphasized the concept that the children remain active rather than sitting and watching videos.

Staff trainings and Meetings:

Day Care Director Lauren Montano attended a Director's Forum Meeting in Hartford, as well as attended a class entitled, *Family & Community Involvement in Early Childhood Programs* in December, a requirement for the Connecticut Directors' Credential. This course was offered through Connecticut Charts-a-Course and Charter Oak State College. The course was paid for by the Department of Social Services.

-Parent-teacher conferences were held on Wednesday and Friday- Jan. 27 and 29th.

-Two head-teachers – Amanda and Barbara attended a training class in the morning on Friday, January 29 on the Socio-Emotional Development of Young Children in Hamden.

Counseling

Documentation updates: All clinicians and the psychiatrist are using the Carepath system of documentation and are implementing concurrent documentation with their clients.

Mr. Sorkin provided an overview of Counselors' activities including the on-call emergencies of current clients and also any residents. Mr. Sorkin illustrated a few examples of cases.

Census: approximately 100 clients.

Waiting list: Currently no waiting list exists. Appointments are being scheduled or inquiries are being referred to private practitioners, as inquiry calls are being triaged.

Other: The Quarterly Harbor Health audit of clients charts was completed. Counseling Services are in good standings.

Youth Services:

Prevention/Substance Abuse Prevention Council

Vision Goggle Presentation: In cooperation with the Physical Education teachers at North Haven High School, all students in grade nine took part in an inter-active presentation using vision goggles which simulate an increased BAC of a low, moderate, and high level of alcohol consumption.

Drug Free Communities Grant: The SAPC, endorsed by the Town of North Haven continues to move forward with the application process for the March 19, 2010 deadline for the Drug Free Communities Grant. Mr. Heinig, who is a member of the SAPC, discussed the work that they have already begun, including writing possible mission statements as well as providing an organizational structures, that will soon be presented to the council. Additionally, Mr. Sorkin and Mr. Heinig provided a bit of background on the Substance Abuse Prevention Council to orient the new commissioners.

Juvenile Review Board: No updates were given. Mr. Sorkin agreed to provide an update on activities of this board at the next meeting.

Middle School Fun Night: During the months of February, March, April and May, Friday night activities will be held at the Recreation Center have been planned for middle school students.

Additionally, an after school computer club will be launched on February 2, 2010. The club will meet on each consecutive Tuesday during the month of February. During the time the students are meeting, they will learn how to DJ with the assistance of the computer. At the dance on Friday, February 26th, selected students will have a chance to be spin their own music as though they were the DJ. Flyers promoting this event were distributed to each commissioner.

Senior Center:

Copies of the February 2010 *Senior Happenings* brochure of activities and events were distributed to the Commissioners.

Mr. Sorkin highlighted the achievement of Senior Center Staff member Susan Jung. On Friday January 29, 2010, Susan Jung performed life saving measures administering the Heimlich maneuver to one of the Senior Center members. Earlier today, First Selectman Michael Freda presented Susan with a Certificate of Appreciation and a Key to the City. "We are very fortunate to have Susan working with our Seniors. Her compassion and caring goes above and beyond the responsibilities of the job." Mr. Freda, still present at the meeting, reiterated his appreciation and congratulated her on a job well done.

Mrs. Malley asked whether the town facilities have AED defibrillators in each building to respond in an emergency situation. Mr. Sorkin replied that since emergency response staff are housed in close proximity with the town buildings, it may not be necessary to have, but he will look into whether it is mandated to have defibrillators in the buildings.

Renovations Update: Construction close to completion. Final details currently being worked on. The completion has been projected for a couple more weeks. A meeting took place earlier that day with the construction company today and a final list of minor changes/improvements must be addressed before receiving a Certificate of Occupancy (CO). Mr. Sorkin reviewed these minor details with the Commission.

Mr. Freda reported that the anticipated move-in date will be during the week of February 15th.

North Haven Senior Center Memorial Fund: This Memorial Fund was formulated with hopes of donations that will allow the Center to purchase items for the Center that are not supported by the Town Budget. All expenditures will be voted and decided upon the Senior Center Finance Committee. A record of all transactions will be held with the senior members Finance Committee.

Community Services

Energy Assistance Program: Energy Assistance application appointments continue. As of January 29th, 323 applications have been processed. Of the 323 applications:

- 245 applications have been approved
- 29 applications are pending certification
- 36 applications were deemed over income
- 13 applications are for applicants who need to reapply, as they have exceeded the ten day limit to return any missing documentation to complete their application.

It has been requested that Community Action Agency provide a detailed list of names of those applicants in order to provide the appropriate follow up. Those deemed over income will be encouraged to apply for the Town's emergency fuel bank. Those who have incomplete applications will be encouraged to reapply. All applicants will be told about any other social service resources that they may be eligible for.

Monthly Food Bank Statistics for January 2010: 450 meals were distributed in the month.

Mr. Sorkin reported that the number of households accessing the food bank has increased from 34 (in March 2008) to over 100 households as of January 2010. This is due in part to the need that has arisen in the town, as well as the promotion of this service among residents. In addition to accessing the food bank, residents are also encouraged to contact the Department of Social Services to see if they are eligible to apply for the SNAP Program (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program formerly known as the Food Stamp Program).

V. Finance Report:

The December 2009 budget reports were reviewed by the Commission (report ending December 31, 2009).

Community Services: December 2009 snapshot of Community Services expenditures:
bottom line under budget YTD = 42.8%

Welfare: December 2009 snapshot of Welfare expenditures (eviction related expenses):
bottom line over budget YTD = 45.8%.

Senior Center: December 2009 snapshot of Senior Center expenditures:
October bottom line under budget YTD = 43.5%

Daycare: Snapshots of expenditures through the Daycare grant were reviewed:
November 2009 snapshot: \$23,371.51

Copies of the draft of the 2010-2011 Budget (covering Community Services, Welfare and Senior Center) were presented to the Board of Finance for their review. Questions were welcomed by Mr. Sorkin.

Special Funds : Mr. Sorkin asked the commissioners to review the monthly snapshot of the Special Funds, as of December 31, 2009.

Emergency Fund: balance of \$55,287.57

The Outreach Fund: balance of \$23,743.74

Mr. Sorkin addressed the question posed by Mrs. Meyers at the last meeting regarding the intent of the fund over the course of time. Mr. Sorkin spoke with Director of Finance, Ed Swinkoski who initially indicated that other fees may be associated with putting the funds aside into a different account, but is willing to look into other options (investment or put into a CD to collect some interest). Mr. Sorkin offered to follow up with Mr. Swinkoski next week to explore other options.

Mr. Heinig posed the question if all of those individuals who could use the emergency assistance are successfully being reached, to which Mr. Sorkin's responded that the hope is yes; through the repetitive exposure that the press release advertising energy assistance runs in the local media, the consistent promotion through resident appointments and walk ins on a daily basis. Mr. Heinig would like to explore further ways to promote this emergency fund in order to reach more residents. Mr. Sorkin will look into having this information added to the Town website as well as explore new ways to inform the public about this fund.

Mr. Heinig asked if the donations are earmarked for specific purposes when they are received, to which Mr. Sorkin responded yes. These contributions are primarily earmarked for emergency fuel bank as well as the food bank. Mr. Sorkin will provide a detailed list of contributions that the department has received for each of the special funds.

First Selectman Freda invited a recommendation for a formal request from the commission to further explore the best possible options for the best possible investment for the least amount of fees.

Judith Meyers made a motion to recommend that an exploration be conducted as to how the emergency fund can better be invested for the best return, seconded by Donna Malley. All were in favor. Mr. Freda stated that he will meet with Mr. Swinkoski next week to begin getting the ball rolling in the exploration of other options.

VI. Old Business:

None.

VII. New Business:

None.

VIII. Public Participation:

Former Chair Laurie-Jean Hannon stopped in to the meeting to wish the commission well.

Mr. Freda provided a warm account of a senior center member who expressed his appreciation for the services that Community Services has provided him, specifically access to the food bank, which has helped minimize his monthly expenses. He highlighted this story as it reiterates what Community Services is all about: helping others.

IX. Adjournment:

Walter Heinig asked for a Motion to Adjourn accepted by Judith Meyers, seconded by Donna Malley. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on March 2, 2010.